



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES
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September 9, 2022

Dear: Peter Huffman and the City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services,

The Department of Health (DOH) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Bridge Industrial project. We applaud the city's agreement with Tacoma Pierce County's recommendation to conduct a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for this project. In addition, we encourage expanding the HIA to be more comprehensive and to include a justice-focused community engagement approach. DOH is committed to reducing health disparities by promoting environmental justice. What we have learned through our work promoting environmental justice is that community engagement and empowerment are essential to promoting equity.

DOH has adopted Facilitating Power's 'The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership' model into our draft community engagement guide. It encourages moving along the spectrum from ignoring the community all the way to deferring to them for decision making. We recognize that moving along this spectrum requires additional time, money, and expertise. DOH is learning and currently hiring for additional capacity to support SEPA and HIA activities and could potentially provide support for enhanced community engagement for a more complete HIA.

We would also like to bring the Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment's Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessment to your awareness. The second minimum element from the guidance is:

"HIA involves and engages stakeholders affected by the proposal, particularly populations facing inequities and significant barriers to health and wellbeing who may be disproportionately affected by the proposal."

Within the practice of HIAs, it is becoming accepted that this principle is critical to achieving the full goals of an HIA.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or want to discuss a potential collaboration with us on this work.

Sincerely,

Rad Cunningham
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